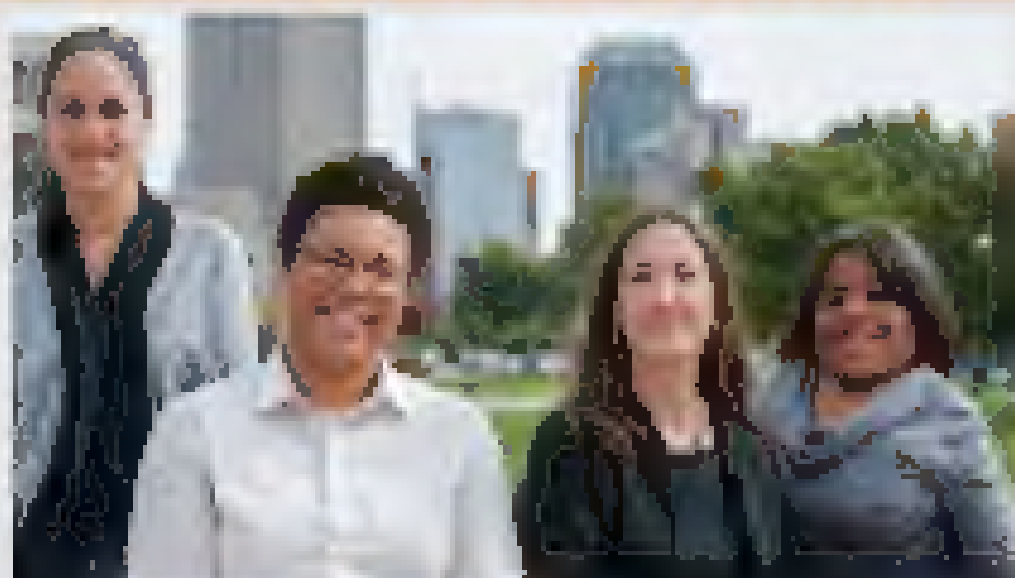


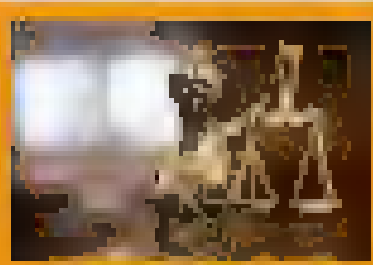
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## Ensuring All Students Succeed, Equity at the School Level



*"Transformative change toward equity means paradigmatic systems change that disrupts and dismantles historical legacies of normative assumptions, beliefs, and practices about individual characteristics and cultural identities that marginalize and disenfranchise people and groups of people."*

—Harvard and Pew Research Assistance Center



### Did You Know

Equity-focused EA Promotes Systemic Shifts in Education Systems

Educators across the country are grappling with ways to achieve the persistence required in our education systems. “Regardless, the US Civil Rights Movement has experienced such urgency, and mobilization to achieve requires all the sacrifices of race, national origin, sex, and religion.” (Thomas, Burke, & Warner, 2016, p. 1). The current reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), once again renews educators’ mobilization towards creating effective solutions to address the disparities in student outcomes. While the foundational theme of equity, ESSA provides educators a renewed opportunity to shift conversations related to the educational outcomes of diverse students from “closing achievement gaps” to increasing educational equity for all students (Dantley, 2017).

Schools are complex systems, and making meaningful change in education that is rooted in equity, justice, structures and practices requires systemic and multi-level work. Schools, state and local education agencies often find support for increasing their capacity to address knowledge and implement equitable strategies from technical assistance centers (TACs) (Gill, 2017). TACs assist local and state education agencies by sharing information about research and practice based strategies, and providing guidance on policies that affect teaching and practice in schools (Ruckert & Ariles, 2004). In addition, TACs assist state, district, and school leaders by increasing their knowledge of federal and state-level policies and the impact on the educational experiences of all students (Chen et al, 2014).

Equity-focused technical assistance enables educators to shift systems in ways that redistribute resources and decision-making power, as well as permeate a recognition and valuing of differences as reflected in perspectives, practices, curricula, school cultures, and climate (Ruckert & Ariles, 2004).



## Why It Matters

A Need for Capacity Building for Promoting Equitable Practices

Transformative change towards equity comes by paying attention to the people—the people, dispositions, behaviors and perspectives of individuals within an organization, as well as the structures and systems in which they exist (Gore, 2016). Education leaders have expressed a desire for assistance to increase their capacity to confront and to create equitable remedies to institutional biases (Farrington, 2017). This includes seeing the signals in everyday life systems of color are inherent to their daily experiences (in addition to other deficit viewpoints associated with disability, sex, gender and socio-economic background) (Dantley,

Technical assistance is individual assistance (TA) often only on top of state training that provides external consultants or experts that will come into a system and fix problems by providing professional development required towards increasing educators' technical skills (i.e., problems related to the implementation of a specific program). Equity-focused TA goes beyond a reliance solely on technical expertise of professional learning, and instead engages educators in examining classroom, school, district and equity cultures, as well as the power dynamics within systems that are marginalizing individuals within the system (Mulligan & Roeland 2019). Equity-focused TA leverages the experiences, perspectives, and knowledge of the people within systems, with particular emphasis on the perspectives of historically underserved individuals. The central aim of equity-focused TA is to identify and dismantle historical legacies of normative assumptions, beliefs, and practices about individual characteristics and cultural identities that marginalize and disadvantage people and groups of people (Gross-Lewis Equity Center 2012), with the ultimate goal of capacity-building. Equity-focused TA understands expanding an organization's capacity to address issues of resources. Equity-focused TA does this by using critical-reflective equity to foster a space for stakeholders to collaborate and dialogue about ways to enact racism, sexism and other inequities that play out in school environments, promoting equitable outcomes.



## For Equity Now

Leverage Your System's Assets by  
Partnering with the MDPEAC

Educational systems that are able to leverage their assets to better address current and emerging issues related to ensuring all students have equitable access to highly effective and resource-rich learning opportunities, are more likely to create equitable outcomes for all students. Equity Assistance Centers (EACs) can be instrumental in assisting educational systems in advancing their capacity to create equity-oriented solutions and sustainable equity-oriented practices.

Funded by the United States Department of Education under Title IV of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, EACs provide technical assistance and professional learning opportunities, non-exclusively, to the areas of race, sex, national origin, and religion, to public school districts and other responsible governmental agencies to promote equitable education opportunities (U.S. Department of Education, 2018).

The Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center (MAP EAC) at the National Education Policy Institute (NEPI) is a regional center that provides equity-focused technical assistance resources to educational systems. The center serves state and local education agencies in 13 states including Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota and Wisconsin. Consultants and staff members at the MAP EAC are highly skilled, scholar-practitioners with over 30 combined years of experience in educational equity and educational improvement initiatives.

The MAP EAC offers a continuum of services, ranging from universally accessible tools and resources to various topic-specific learning networks, and the provision of individualized consultative services to state and local education agencies interested in receiving customized support for systemic change efforts. The MAP EAC's service delivery framework matches the center to customized services to the needs of each requesting state or local education agency. The center provides a variety of technical assistance resources across many topics and focus areas as well including but not limited to:

- Legal requirements related to nondiscrimination on the basis of race, sex, national origin, and religion
- Professional learning opportunities designed to develop educator skills in employing culturally responsive practices such as identification of race and sex bias in instructional materials
- Information regarding effective methods of increasing academically at-risk students' susceptibility to desegregation
- Tools, resources and professional development opportunities to combat issues such as harassment and bullying
- Facilitation support in equity-oriented strategic planning and equity-focused implementation efforts
- Strategies for promoting racial and socioeconomic integration

(HISD Framework, 2018)

Educational systems that maximally focus efforts on addressing systemic inequities, and leveraging both internal and external assets, can realize equitable learning outcomes for all students. Through the provision of equity-focused TA, the MAP EAC can assist in responding to your organization's equity requirements to create opportunities to learn for all students, regardless of and responsive to race, sex, national origin, religion, as well as income, eliminating disparities among and between student groups (Crutchfield Equity Center, 2018).

To learn more about the Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center, please view this brief [video](#).



